

1 GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
2 ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE REGULATION ADMINISTRATION  
3 ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL BOARD  
4

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6 IN THE MATTER OF: :  
7 Eritrean Cultural Center :  
8 t/a Eritrean Cultural Center :  
9 1214 18th Street Northwest :  
10 License # 102052 :  
11 Retailer CX

12 Multipurpose Facility  
13 ANC 2B

14 Monday, March 30, 2016 :

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16 Monday, March 30, 2016

17 Whereupon, the above-referenced matter  
18 came on for hearing at the Alcoholic Beverage  
19 Control Board, Reeves Center, 2000 14th Street,  
20 N.W., Suite 400S, Washington, D.C. 20009.

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22

1 CHAIRPERSON:

2 DONOVAN ANDERSON, Presiding

3

4 MEMBERS OF THE BOARD:

5 NICK ALBERTI

6 JAMES SHORT

7 MIKE SILVERSTEIN

8 RUTHANNE MILLER

9

10 OTHER PERSONS PRESENT

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 Eritrean Cultural Center

3 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: The next case is  
4 the Eritrean Cultural Center, license #102052,  
5 application for a CX multipurpose facility. Will  
6 the parties please appear and identify yourself  
7 for the record, please.

8 MR. JACKSON: Yes, Jeff Jackson, agent  
9 representative for the applicant.

10 MS. TEKLE: Asten Tekle, board member and  
11 a treasurer for the ECC - Eritrean Cultural and  
12 Civic Center.

13 MR. CAREY: My name is John Carey, with  
14 Douglas Development, project manager.

15 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: There is a sign-in  
16 sheet in front of you, can you please all sign in  
17 for us? I will wait until you guys finish  
18 signing in. Who will be speaking for the  
19 organization?

20 MR. JACKSON: Myself and my assistant.

21 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So, can you tell  
22 the board, provide some background information

1 about the organization, what is it you're seeking  
2 and why the board should make whatever decision  
3 that you're asking us to make?

4 MR. JACKSON: Okay, the Eritrean Cultural  
5 and Civic Center was original located at 6th and  
6 Oak Street, for approximately 26 years. So,  
7 Douglas Development purchased the property and  
8 relocated them to 1214 18th Street. The Eritrean  
9 Cultural and Civic Center is just that, it's a  
10 cultural center for the Eritrean community that  
11 will be having cultural events for the Eritrean  
12 community, but they would also have a restaurant  
13 be open to the public. So we'll have like  
14 worship events, weddings, dances and things of  
15 that sort. And more so, social gathering.

16 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So, tell me about  
17 -- this is all new to me -- so tell me about who  
18 -- I guess you're saying the restaurant is open  
19 to the public but the other portion of the  
20 facility, who can utilize that?

21 MR. JACKSON: Just the members and their  
22 guests.

1                   CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Just give me a  
2 little more background information about the  
3 organization, please. I mean, how long has it  
4 been in existence.

5                   MS. TEKLE: Oh, the organization. We  
6 open for -- the club is a center, it's not a  
7 club, it's like a community center and each  
8 Saturday we have our own kids go there and learn  
9 the language and we have weddings and engagements  
10 and christenings. It's a community gathering  
11 place and we have Independence Day coming soon on  
12 the 24th. We will have people from all over the  
13 United States coming and we have the festivals in  
14 August which is a three-day celebration and  
15 previous we always, even come and extend it for  
16 24 hours, and we always granted that.

17                   It has been open for the past 25 years  
18 and our record is beautiful and we manage  
19 [inaudible 3:55] so it's just a community with a  
20 family gathering and we have a radio station  
21 which is we'll listen to it every Saturday and  
22 it's about culture, about the community, about

1     what is the event of the weekend.

2                 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON:   Now, is the  
3     restaurant new or was the restaurant always a  
4     portion of the old establishment?

5                 MR. JACKSON:   The restaurant was always  
6     part of the old establishment.

7                 MS. TEKLE:   We've been there for 25  
8     years.

9                 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON:   Okay, all right.  
10    Any other questions that the board members want  
11    to ask?   Go ahead, Mr. Short.

12                MR. SHORT:   Good afternoon.   Now, a  
13    private club means the use of club members and  
14    their guests.

15                MR. JACKSON:   Correct.

16                MR. SHORT:   But you're also going to  
17    have, and under the same roof, a cafeteria that  
18    anybody can come into?

19                MR. JACKSON:   Right.   A restaurant.

20                MR. SHORT:   How do you separate the  
21    guests and members from the public that comes in  
22    and uses your restaurant?   Well, the restaurant

1 is open during certain hours and when the  
2 restaurant is open they're not able to partake in  
3 any of the cultural events. Do you understand  
4 the meaning of a CX license?

5 MR. JACKSON: Correct.

6 MR. SHORT: Tell me your understanding.

7 MR. JACKSON: For the members and their  
8 guests.

9 MR. SHORT: Okay, so now you have two  
10 separate entities under the same roof using that  
11 one license. So, does the restaurant have its  
12 own license?

13 MR. JACKSON: No, it's a part of the  
14 establishment.

15 MR. SHORT: But anybody can come to that.

16 MR. JACKSON: Anybody can come to the  
17 restaurant.

18 MR. SHORT: So a CX license says that  
19 doesn't take place. So, there's a contradiction.  
20 Or am I missing something?

21 MR. JACKSON: Well, a CX license doesn't  
22 say that -- it doesn't say that you cannot have a

1 restaurant. It says that you have to provide  
2 food, but the restaurant portion in the CX  
3 license doesn't say that the restaurant can only  
4 be available to the members and their guests.

5 MR. SHORT: That's your interpretation. What  
6 does the law say? I heard your interpretation.  
7 What does the law say?

8 MR. JACKSON: That it's available to the  
9 guests and their members.

10 MR. SHORT: Okay, thank you. That's all  
11 I have Mr. Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Do you have any  
13 other questions by any other board members?

14 MR. SILVERSTEIN: So, I'm at least going  
15 to give you my view as to why you're here,  
16 because I think I was in favor of having your --  
17 you're going to a new location, right?

18 MR. JACKSON: Yes.

19 MR. SHORT: And things can change at a  
20 new location, I mean things are getting busier at  
21 your old location but things are already busy at  
22 your new location. So it can affect, I guess,



1 your business model. So I kind of want to -- and  
2 this is related to, I think, Mr. Short's  
3 concerns. What are the hours for the restaurant  
4 that's open to the public?

5 MR. JACKSON: The restaurant hours will  
6 be 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. to 3:00  
7 a.m. Friday and Saturday.

8 MR. SHORT: And would entertainment be  
9 available in the restaurant area?

10 MR. JACKSON: No, it would not be.

11 MR. SHORT: So, you're willing to  
12 stipulate on your license no entertainment as  
13 part of the restaurant portion of the  
14 establishment, right?

15 MR. JACKSON: Correct.

16 MR. SHORT: Okay. I'm not saying where  
17 the decision is coming down but I just want to  
18 know where -- what your needs and requirements  
19 and desires are.

20 MR. JACKSON: Right. Now, let me  
21 explain. The new location that's being built is  
22 going to have a radio station, television

1 station, restaurant -- and the restaurant is  
2 going to have its own separate entrance from the  
3 other portions of the establishment.

4 MR. SHORT: Right, okay.

5 MR. JACKSON: This is Douglas  
6 Development, he's the contractor.

7 MR. CAREY: Yes, so just to clarify  
8 before he addresses -- where now we basically  
9 exchange [inaudible 7:36] so they can be part of  
10 our other development. So, we're moving them  
11 temporarily basically, to the address on 18th  
12 street and we hope to have their new facility  
13 where they will stay long term out on New York  
14 Avenue on 24th place completed by July-August.

15 So that's where they're going to be  
16 ultimately and they are basing the swing space,  
17 which we've owned for a while and it was a  
18 restaurant, I guess it was a bar before. So,  
19 they're in there just until we can get their new  
20 facility completed and then they're going to be  
21 out there.

22 MR. SHORT: So, there'll be another

1 transfer?

2 MR. JACKSON: Yes. Yes, sir.

3 MR. SHORT: Okay.

4 MR. CAREY: We can't build fast enough.

5 MR. SHORT: I know, I know. Nobody can  
6 build fast enough in the city these days.

7 MR. CAREY: It's a problem.

8 MR. SHORT: Yeah. Well, it explains why  
9 you're here. I was wondering why you were here.  
10 I don't think I have -- so, how big is the  
11 restaurant?

12 MR. CAREY: The one right now --

13 MR. SHORT: Yeah the one right now  
14 because that's the one we're dealing with. We'll  
15 deal with the other one when it comes about.

16 MR. CAREY: This is [inaudible square  
17 feet including out back, the back of the house.  
18 So, out front I think it's up to 2000 square feet  
19 and is basically a long, narrow room, seats and a  
20 bar and it's [inaudible 8:46] --

21 MR. SHORT: It's out of the [inaudible  
22 8:48 ] any idea of what the occupancy would be

1 for the restaurant?

2 MR. CAREY: Probably about 120 right out.

3 MR. SHORT: Okay.

4 MR. CAREY: 150 feet. Not very large.

5 The facility in the future will be 250 feet.

6 MR. SHORT: And so where is the rest of  
7 the club?

8 MR. CAREY: That's a basement where  
9 they're going to use for social stuff, so it's a  
10 first floor and then a basement and the basement  
11 is going to be meeting rooms and that kind of  
12 stuff.

13 MR. SHORT: Okay.

14 MR. CAREY: It's out back.

15 MR. SHORT: I don't think I have any  
16 additional questions right now, thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Ms. Miller.

18 MS. MILLER: Hi. I just have some  
19 questions so that I understand what you're doing  
20 better.

21 MR. JACKSON: Okay.

22 MS. MILLER: Do you presently have a club

1 license in the location that you're in?

2 MR. JACKSON: Yes, a CX license, correct.

3 MS. MILLER: You currently have one.

4 MR. JACKSON: Yes.

5 MS. MILLER: So, your operations have  
6 already been determined to qualify for that  
7 license, so it's just a question --

8 MR. JACKSON: For 26 years.

9 MS. MILLER: Okay, 26 years, good. All  
10 right. Then, my second question is -- and this  
11 may be one that I can probably get from here, but  
12 just in case you thought about it. There's a  
13 restaurant and then the rest of the building,  
14 right?

15 MR. JACKSON: Correct.

16 MS. MILLER: Are you seeking -- is there  
17 a restaurant now?

18 MR. JACKSON: Yes, we have a restaurant  
19 now.

20 MS. MILLER: So, that has a restaurant  
21 license now is that right? So you're going to  
22 have two licenses, the restaurant and the --

1 MR. JACKSON: It's being transferred.

2 MS. MILLER: That's being transferred.

3 MR. JACKSON: Right, everything's being  
4 transferred to this location because the one on  
5 6th and O is closing.

6 MR. ALBERTI: For this one license. She  
7 asked if you're going to have two licenses.

8 MS. MILLER: Yeah.

9 MR. JACKSON: Well, the restaurant  
10 license is under the business license, so.

11 MS. MILLER: It's under the CX license?

12 MR. JACKSON: Well, you have the CX  
13 license and then you have a basic business  
14 license, and under the basic business license you  
15 have the restaurant endorsement.

16 MS. MILLER: Okay. So, you anticipate  
17 the same setup where you're going?

18 MR. JACKSON: Yeah.

19 MR. CAREY: We're duplicating it.

20 MS. MILLER: You're duplicating it, okay.  
21 So you have the same situation.

22 MR. JACKSON: Same situation. Just have

1 a different address.

2 MS. MILLER: Okay. That's all that's  
3 different?

4 MR. ALBERTI: It's a transfer to a new  
5 location so they have two licenses.

6 MS. MILLER: Okay, all right.

7 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Yes, Mr.  
8 Silverstein.

9 MR. SILVERSTEIN: Thank you for coming.  
10 One of the issues we've had in that area has been  
11 the use of promoters Sunday night and these  
12 things have turned out in a number of cases to be  
13 quite unfortunate with acts of violence. Do you  
14 have any plans at all to use promoters to bring  
15 in outside events?

16 MR. JACKSON: No, no promoters for the  
17 last 26 years, just the members and guests. No  
18 outside promoters or leasing it out, not renting  
19 it out. The majority of the time there's nothing  
20 going on but social gatherings, so it's not like  
21 they have any performances or anything like that,  
22 it's mainly just a social gathering and the

1 cultural things.

2 MR. SILVERSTEIN: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Yes, Mr. Short.

4 MR. SHORT: I am quite familiar with your  
5 location at 6th and O, it's quite a lot of  
6 parking going on down in there.

7 MR. JACKSON: Yeah.

8 MR. SHORT: So, how will your parking be  
9 in your new location?

10 MR. CAREY: There will be street parking  
11 on 6th and Elm and north of Dupont or south of  
12 Dupont is much different other than it's further  
13 downtown. That's why we're moving to the new  
14 facility with parking, but right now I don't  
15 think it's any different other than I guess a  
16 little busier.

17 MR. SHORT: You say with parking, the new  
18 location with --

19 MR. CAREY: The new location out of New  
20 York is yeah --

21 MR. SHORT: No, the one we're discussing  
22 today.



1           MR. CAREY: There's no parking at that  
2 facility.

3           MR. SHORT: What will you do with your  
4 club members and the parking?

5           MS. TEKLE: We had, I'm sorry, we had  
6 announced it to our members and we have a last  
7 meal together all that, last two weeks, and  
8 everybody knows that there is no parking and they  
9 understood that as long as we are waiting -- this  
10 is for transition -- everybody will use the Metro  
11 and they understood that and another four or five  
12 months we know we are going to our new home, so  
13 it's a transition, we might suffer, we're all  
14 going to use the Metro and taxi, and most of them  
15 [inaudible 13:07] so.

16           MR. SHORT: Okay, so you're going to do  
17 your very best so we don't get an earful from the  
18 community about parking down there, right?

19           MS. TEKLE: No, no, no, no, no.

20           MR. SHORT: You're going to do your very  
21 best.

22           MS. TEKLE: We are going to do our best

1 and our members are very understanding that there  
2 is no parking that they can go in and out. After  
3 6:00, after 7:00. They understood. We announced  
4 it to them. Everybody knows.

5 MR. ALBERTI: Just so everybody  
6 understands that the decision in here is to  
7 whether or not placard your license for the new  
8 location. So, the community will have an  
9 opportunity to do comments through the protest  
10 period, so it's up to them what they want to do.  
11 But I just wanted to make sure everybody  
12 understands.

13 MS. TEKLE: Yes, okay, thanks.

14 MR. ALBERTI: Okay.

15 MR. SHORT: Thank you, Mr. Alberti.

16 MR. ALBERTI: You're welcome.

17 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Any other  
18 questions by any other board members? Any other.  
19 Yes, Ms. Miller.

20 MS. MILLER: I do, I'm sorry. Okay, so  
21 Mr. Alberti said that the issue here is one of  
22 we're going to design a placard, so whether the

1 public sees the notice of this application  
2 whether placard or non-placard?

3 MR. ALBERTI: I think that's probably the  
4 outcome of this hearing. Yeah, what? I mean,  
5 maybe I -- listen we always placard transfers to  
6 a new location. I guess what we want to know was  
7 is there changes in this license and does this  
8 still qualify? What"

9 MS. MILLER: Okay.

10 MR. ALBERTI: Don't shake your head. Are  
11 there any changes to this license that would call  
12 into question whether or not the CX application  
13 still is appropriate?

14 MR. JACKSON: No change to the license.

15 MR. ALBERTI: Right, so that's what I  
16 want to hear and that's why our questions are  
17 coming forth. And it's partly, again, because  
18 you're moving to a very busy area --

19 MR. JACKSON: Understood.

20 MR. ALBERTI: of downtown, and I  
21 understand you'll move in later, we didn't know  
22 that, but any so that's why you're here and I

1     guess the board will discuss what we've heard  
2     today.

3             MS. MILLER:   Thank you.   Okay.

4             MR. ALBERTI:   I'm just curious as how.  
5     You're doing a development at 24th and New York?

6             MR. CAREY:    It's now 24th Place.   Towards  
7     the end there, it's the facility.

8             MR. ALBERTI:   Right there at the corner  
9     of Williamsburg?

10            MR. CAREY:    Not on the corner, no.

11            MR. JACKSON:   You know where Mom's  
12    Carryout, I mean Mom's Organic Market?

13            MR. ALBERTI:   Oh.

14            MR. JACKSON:   They developed Mom's  
15    Organic Market and it's right there on the  
16    backside of that.

17            MR. ALBERTI:   Oh, okay, so I got you.  
18    That's what you're talking about.

19            MS. MILLER:    Yeah.

20            MR. ALBERTI:   All right, all right, I  
21    didn't associate that with 24th Place.

22            CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON:   Are there any

1 other comments by any other board members? Any  
2 other final thoughts that you guys want to make.

3 MR. CAREY: No.

4 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right, we will  
5 take this matter under advisement and make a  
6 decision in due course.

7 MR. CAREY: Thank you.

8 MS. TEKLE: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Thank you for  
10 coming.

11 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter was  
12 concluded.)

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17 [Whereupon, at 10:14 a.m. the  
18 above-entitled matter concluded.]